

## *Impact Evaluation on Wetlands*

**The purpose of the study is to determine if changes in TVA's reservoir system operating policies would produce greater overall public value.**

### **Background**

TVA is conducting a formal evaluation of its policies for operating the Tennessee River reservoir system, including an analysis of the economic impacts of any potential changes in these policies. Existing policies affect how much reservoir levels fluctuate, when changes in reservoir levels occur, and the amount of water flowing through the reservoir system at different times of the year, depending on rainfall.

The purpose of the study is to determine if changes in TVA's reservoir system operating policies would produce greater overall public value. Technical analyses will be performed to evaluate the impacts of TVA's current policies and the potential impacts of alternatives on a number of resource areas and other issues.

The two-year Reservoir Operations Study (ROS) is scheduled for completion in October 2003.

The impacts on wetlands will be evaluated as part of the ROS, and the results will be documented in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). TVA will conduct the study in accordance with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements.

### **Potential Impacts**

- Wetlands occur along the shorelines of TVA reservoirs and the tributaries of the Tennessee River system. The types of wetlands found include forested, scrub-shrub, emergent, and aquatic bed.
- Wetlands are important for flood and erosion control, water quality, and wildlife habitat, and they provide important recreation opportunities for Valley residents.
- Changes in reservoir system operating policies could affect wetland habitats. Since many of these areas have developed over the past 40 years in response to the reservoir levels, any change in the timing or duration of reservoir elevations and fluctuations could change the extent and type of wetlands.

### **Geographic Areas**

- The study will look at wetlands located within one-tenth of a mile of the main-river channel, or its tributaries, that are influenced by groundwater connections with the river system.

### **Scope of Analysis**

- The study will include wetlands associated with every reservoir in the TVA system, including those directly associated with the main river, tributaries, and tributary streams influenced by reservoir operations.
- The wetland analyses will be conducted using a combination of National Wetland Inventory data and shoreline habitat surveys, where available.

- The data will be analyzed using a computerized geographic information system (ARC/INFO) that provides a general description of the types and extent of wetland habitats in each reservoir.
- Technical analysis will include a thorough evaluation of the extent and types of wetlands in the river system, as well as the potential impacts of alternatives on wetland resources, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act.

#### **For More Information**

To submit comments or get additional information, members of the public are invited to visit TVA's Web site at [www.tva.com](http://www.tva.com), to call toll-free 888-882-7675, to fax TVA at 865-632-3146, or to write to ROS Project Manager David Nye, Tennessee Valley Authority, c/o WT 11A, 400 West Summit Hill Dr., Knoxville, TN 37902.